

MEETING SUMMARY
Island Fox Recovery Coordination Group Meeting

April 5-7, 2005
Ventura, CA

1. Review of Agenda

2. Review of “To Do” list from last meeting

Completed items were noted. Items not completed were moved to new “To Do” list.

3. Island Updates

Santa Catalina Island. There have been no new mortalities since the last meeting; there have been 4 total this year.

Dave Garcelon and Winston Vickers have been working with Linda Munson to put together a research proposal to investigate ontogeny of ear tumors. This would likely be at least a 3-year project.

Year 1 – bacteriology virology, increase monitoring

Year 2 – genetics, continue monitoring

Year 3 – continue monitoring and TBD from years 1 and 2

There was one fox that was brought in because it was sick. It apparently had some exposure to fungal toxins.

San Miguel Island. There have been no new mortalities.

Santa Rosa Island (SRI). A 5th fox that was released in the fall was killed by a golden eagle.

Santa Cruz Island (SCI). A golden eagle killed 1 fox, female 119. She was a 2004 pup. Currently there are 76 collared foxes. 47 pups were produced in 2004.

The pig eradication on SCI started last week. TNC and NPS hosted a press day at SCI on Friday 4/8/05.

Golden Eagle Update. There are 2 mating pairs that have nested. One is pair on SRI and one is on SCI. They have eggs in their nests. Eagle removal efforts are continuing.

4. Analysis 3.4

Develop management and husbandry plans for each subspecies, taking into account studbook data and results from research into best husbandry practices (pen size, mate choice, etc.). The focus for research and management for each captive population will depend on the size and stability of that subspecies' wild and captive populations.

The RCG concluded its discussion of the analysis. The RCG's formal recommendations will be issued shortly.

5. Analysis 1.3

Use PVA models (developed in Analysis 1.1) and supporting data to determine the conditions on the wild populations that would trigger taking further foxes into captivity (e.g., during pig eradication on Santa Cruz or if another disease outbreak occurred).

The RCG completed its response to Analysis 1.3. This response was issued as a memorandum from the RCG on 4/13/05.

6. Technical Analysis Request (TAR) 3.6

The RCG concluded its discussion of the analysis request.

TAR 3.6 (see attached Appendix A) was issued on 4/12/05, with Peter Siminski asked to serve as Chairperson Liaison to the Task Force.

7. Review of Carlstead Proposal

The RCG discussed responses to the requested review of the proposed study and agreed that the comments were very helpful. The group will ask Kathy Carlstead to do a revised proposal and send it to the RCG and reviewers.

The discussion centered on the need to develop a set of recommendation for priority research and a ranking of the importance of different approaches in terms of the insights they might yield. Devra Kleiman was tasked with organizing a series of conference calls with husbandry people in preparation for a day-long session at the annual meeting in June to establish these priorities.

8. Impromptu Discussion with Tim Coonan of Channel Islands National Park

The recent 5th fox mortality on SRI from golden eagle predation was the subject of discussion and warranted an addition to the agenda. The 5th mortality reached a previously established "trigger" to bring released foxes at SRI back into captivity. Tim Coonan was concerned about bringing in foxes during breeding season and the RCG shared these concerns. After the discussion with Tim the RCG felt it would not be prudent to bring foxes into captivity at this time. (The RCG issued a memorandum addressing this topic on 4/8/05.)

9. Planning for 2005 Island Fox Integrated Recovery Team Meeting

The RCG discussed how to organize and fund the yearly meeting in June. A draft agenda is in progress, but the meeting will likely begin with island updates and presentations and conclude with the concurrent discussion sessions. The RCG is also exploring the logistics of having a field trip in association with the meeting, as per a suggestion from Cynthia Wilkerson.

10. Conflict of Interest

The RCG discussed a draft document on conflict of interest. While it is fairly common for researchers to be on recovery teams, the group acknowledged the importance of ensuring that RCG members are not using inside knowledge of issues unfairly. Revised draft guidelines will be presented for discussion at the annual meeting.

11. Planning for the Next RCG Meeting in early June

Officials from the Federal and State agencies and the other organizations involved in island fox recovery were asked to attend, if possible. The intent is to discuss with them eagle issues, captive breeding, a commitment to funding island fox projects, etc.

12. Recovery Brainstorming

The RCG had a recovery discussion and developed ideas to be implemented into the Recovery Plan.

Recovery Plan Outline

A Recovery Plan structure consists of 3 main parts

Part one. Includes background information, the reasons for listing, threats, the recovery strategy, and how the team approaches recovery.

Part 2. Contains the goal for the recovering the species and identifies recovery criteria. Examples of a goal: (1) to restore population to XXX, (2) to delist, or (3) secure in threatened status.

Part 3. Includes the implementation schedule and a table identifying agencies and the costs for tasks.

General Structure

Goal

Sub-goals

Objectives

Action items

Scheduled Meetings:

- RCG Meeting: June 1-2, location Yolo Bypass
- Integrated Recovery Team Meeting: June 21-23 in Ventura
- RCG Meeting: August 24-25 (backup dates August 22-23), location TBD

Current RCG Members and Institutional Affiliations:

Carl Benz	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Brian Cypher	CSU Stanislaus (Endangered Species Recovery Program)
David Graber	National Park Service
Devra Kleiman	Zoo-Logic
Peter Schuyler	Catalina Island Conservancy
Rebecca Shaw	The Nature Conservancy
Dale Steele	California Department of Fish and Game
Rosie Woodroffe	University of California, Davis
Lilian Carswell	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (facilitator/communications coordinator)
Eric Morrisette	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (facilitator/communications coordinator)

Appendix A

Technical Analysis Request 3.6: Assessment of the Potential Benefits and Costs of Long-term Captive Populations on the Mainland and/or Islands

Captive populations of island foxes established and maintained on a long-term basis on the mainland and/or islands could potentially contribute to long-term conservation and recovery efforts. A technical analysis is needed to determine whether the establishment of such captive populations would be beneficial, given the current existing wild and on-island captive populations, and given the primary goal of increasing the viability of wild populations. The following analyses are requested:

1. Identify and describe the potential benefits, costs, and major issues associated with the following strategies (or combinations thereof) for maintaining captive populations of island foxes:

- a. using existing on-island facilities
- b. expanding on-island facilities
- c. using existing space in mainland facilities (*e.g.*, zoos)
- d. constructing new mainland facilities for island foxes

To the extent possible, quantify, or at least rank, the benefits (*e.g.*, % reduction in risk of extinction) and costs. Where possible, document any associated issues as part of this effort. This analysis should consider and incorporate where appropriate the results of the risk analysis completed by Fritcher and Mazet [Fritcher, D., and J. Mazet. 2004. Risk Analysis for Island Fox (*Urocyon littoralis*) Inter-island and Island-mainland-island Movements. 17 June 2004]. The analysis should also consider the potential value of one or more long-term redundant populations independent of the status of the wild populations.

2. Identify to the extent possible the necessary steps and their logical progression for establishing and managing captive populations on the mainland [*e.g.*, identifying space, securing permits, addressing on-island and off-island quarantine issues, establishing an oversight strategy (*e.g.*, Species Survival Plan), transporting animals, etc.].

3. If the establishment of mainland populations is determined to be both desirable and practical, identify weighted criteria to be used to prioritize subspecies of island foxes for representation in mainland populations. Potential criteria to consider for each subspecies could include, but are not limited to, genetic attributes, status of wild and captive populations, current and potential risks to on-island wild and captive populations, and any special challenges (*e.g.*, *Spirocerca* and *Angiocaulus* issues).

Relates to: San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, Santa Catalina.

Technical Expertise Groups involved: PM, CP, WP, G, FH.

Lead Group: CP.

Due Date: May 20, 2005